

Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2015-2025



Lisa B. Allen
Forestry Division Chief

8-24-15
Date

Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area, # 7103
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1971
- **Acreage:** 5,661 acres
- **County:** Phelps and Crawford
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Forestry
- **Statements of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage for healthy forests and wildlife, the restoration of natural landscapes and public recreational opportunities.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition of Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area (CA) is a woodland/forest landscape along the Meramec River and Dry Fork Creek.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

This area, or a portion thereof, was acquired (or developed) with Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars to provide land or facilities for public outdoor recreation.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. Priority Areas:** Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area is within or contains parts of the Dry Fork Priority Watershed, Woodson K. Woods Wildlife Priority Area, Priority Forest Landscape and the Dry Fork Upper Meramec Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area.

Natural Area: Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area contains the entirety of the 417-acre Spring's End Forest Natural Area.

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. Caves:** None
- C. Springs:** Yes, records kept with the Department Natural History Biologist.

III. Existing Infrastructure

- 10 parking lots (Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, 1 gravel lot with a concrete pad)
- 32.25 miles of access roads and trails
- 1 privy (ADA accessible)
- 9 structures (1 cabin, 1 workshop, 5 equipment storage buildings, 1 chemical storage building, and 1 sign and seed storage building)
- 1 boat ramp (gravel access to Meramec River)
- 24 fishless ponds
- 5 small gravel pit ponds joining river (open to fishing)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** The initial donation from the Woods Foundation carried a request for the area to “Not be used as a high density public use, but rather that the public use the land as a hike-in area.”
- B. Federal Interest:** This land must provide land/facilities for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity. Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** Union Electric has a 100-foot wide easement, approximately 4.4 miles long, totaling 53 acres; the easement includes small feeder lines and access for maintenance. The Gulf Central Pipeline Company has a 30-foot wide easement, approximately 1.5 miles long. An adjacent landowner has a road easement to his property.
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** Yes, records kept with the Department Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** Endangered Species are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Management will be focused on maintaining healthy natural communities for wildlife habitat according to 10-year inventories completed on each of the seven compartments.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage forest and woodland communities.
- 2) Maintain healthy and diverse habitats on open ground.
- 3) Maintain 417-acre Spring's End Forest Natural Area.

Management Objective 1: Maintain healthy trees and woodlands with management emphasis on wildlife habitat.

Strategy 1: Monitor woodlands for invasive exotic vegetation, diseases and insects. Suppress any infestations that may develop. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Implement recommendations and practices as recommended in the compartment inventories. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Maintain open land management program to sustain healthy habitats and sustain wildlife food sources.

Strategy 1: Monitor open land for invasive exotic species. Suppress any infestations that may develop. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Maintain habitat diversity as directed in compartment inventories. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Maintain crop ground by planting, as needed and utilizing crop contracts. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Protect, maintain and improve Spring's End Forest Natural Area.

Strategy 1: Monitor natural area for invasive vegetation and animals, diseases and insects. Suppress or control any infestations that may develop. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Implement prescriptions based on inventories developed for the compartments that contain elements of the natural area. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Maintain existing species and habitats within the natural area. (Forestry)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Woodson K. Woods Memorial CA contains portions of the Meramec River, Dry Fork Creek and their tributaries; former gravel-mining pits (in the Meramec River floodplain); springs; and other small impoundments. The confluence of the major spring arising on adjacent property with the Meramec River provides a unique diversity of cold, cool and warm-water aquatic habitats.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage the sport fishery in the Meramec River and Dry Fork Creek.
- 2) Manage riparian and buffer areas around streams, springs and small impoundments.

Management Objective 1: Manage stream fisheries for high-quality sport fishing.

Strategy 1: Maintain several year classes of brown trout through annual stockings. Number stocked will be determined by the trout stocking matrix, and based on the number available from the cold-water hatchery system. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Assess sport fish population status on a two-year interval. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Manage the aquatic habitats and adjacent riparian or buffer areas to maintain or improve aquatic ecological functions for aquatic species of concern.

Strategy 1: Maintain or improve terrestrial natural communities. (Forestry)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Provide hunting and viewing opportunities.
- 2) Provide river access opportunities.
- 3) Build relationships with neighboring landowners.

Management Objective 1: Provide public hunting and viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Conduct annual management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of species. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Conduct annual management activities that will provide hike-in opportunities. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Provide river access opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain boat ramp at Missouri Highway 8 access. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Maintain infrastructure and trails at walk-in access points on Dry Fork River and Meramec River, along Besmer Road. (Forestry)

Strategy 3: Maintain safe area around river access points by assessing and removing possible hazards. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Work with neighbors to minimize any boundary, trespass or any other issues affecting Woodson K. Woods Memorial CA or private property. (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner's properties. (Private Land Services, Forestry)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.
- 2) Improve existing structures.
- 3) Acquisition of land.

Management Objective 1: Maintain area infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain area infrastructure in accordance with Department guidelines and at currently identified maintenance level (1). (Forestry, and Design and Development)

Management Objective 2: Improve existing structures (cabin, workshop, equipment storage buildings, chemical storage building, and sign and seed storage building).

Strategy 1: Improve existing structures to improve energy efficiency, reduce maintenance and increase structure longevity. (Design and Development)

Strategy 2: Improve existing structures to make them useful for new purposes and increase current usage. (Forestry, Design and Development)

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered. (Forestry)

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

Strategies are considered ongoing unless listed in the following table:

| | FY15 | FY16 | FY17 | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Terrestrial Resource Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Objective 1</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Strategy 2* | | X | | X | | X | | | X | |
| Aquatic Resource Management | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Objective 1</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Strategy 2 | | X | | X | | X | | X | | X |

*Woodson K. Woods Compartment Forest Inventory Schedule

Compartment 1: 2016

Compartment 2: 2018

Compartment 3: 2025

Compartment 4: 2023

Compartment 5: 2020

Compartment 6: 2018

Compartment 7: 2018

APPENDICES

Area Background:

Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area is 5,661 acres in size, along the Meramec River in Crawford and Phelps counties, approximately 3 miles east of St. James on Missouri Highway 8. The James Foundation owns Maramec Spring Park, which divides the area. The Woodson K. Woods Memorial CA is in the Ozark Border section.

The initial 5,300 acres were purchased in December 1971 with funds donated by the James H. Woods Foundation, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and Department funds. The acquisition enabled the Department to manage 4.5 miles of the Meramec River for a trout fishery, along with a portion of the Dry Fork River for warm-water fisheries. The purchase also offered an opportunity to partner in resource management activities on the adjoining 1,756 acres of land owned by the James Foundation.

The 280-acre Gray Tract was added in February 1979 to extend the ownership across the Dry Fork and provide access from the county road, while increasing fishing opportunities for the public. Two additional 40-acre tracts were purchased in 1992 to reduce inholdings.

Current Land and Water Types:

| Land/Water Type | Acres | Miles | % of Area |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------|------------|
| Forest and Woodland | 4,670 | | 82.5 |
| Old Field | 325 | | 5.7 |
| Crop Land | 300 | | 5.3 |
| Grassland | 150 | | 2.6 |
| Riparian Wetland | 100 | | 1.8 |
| Glade | 60 | | 1.1 |
| Savanna | 40 | | 0.7 |
| Lakes/Ponds | 16 | | 0.3 |
| Total | 5,661 | | 100 |
| Permanent Stream Frontage | | 7 | |

Public Input Summary:

The draft Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period March 1–31, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received 17 comments from 16 respondents (Appendix A). The Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area Planning Team carefully reviewed and considered these ideas as they finalized this document. A brief summary of public input themes, including how they were

incorporated or why they were not, can be found below. Rather than respond to each individual comment, comments are grouped into general themes and are addressed collectively.

Department responses to themes and issues identified through Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area public comment period

Terrestrial Resource Management

Supports removal of autumn olive.

We will continue efforts to manage invasive species.

Suggests including a strategy for maintaining/improving food plots and waterholes on the area.

We are currently managing several food plots and fishless ponds for wildlife on the area. There are no plans at this time to expand efforts for additional food plots.

Suggests managing food plots along power line right-of-way.

Previous attempts have been made at creating food plots in power line right-of-way that have now been abandoned due to unsuitable ground.

Commenter knows of caves on the area that may support overwintering bats.

Thank you for the information. We are continually learning new information about our areas. Currently all caves on Missouri Department of Conservation property are considered closed as part of the Department's White-nose Syndrome response plan.

Suggests including a map of the seven compartments mentioned.

A compartment map has now been added.

Requests information about timber management plans/compartment inventories. Concern with harvesting mast producing trees.

The purpose of this plan is to determine future overall management goals and direction. Individual management is dictated by forest health issues and wildlife habitat needs.

Suggests managing for savanna habitat.

Savanna is a natural community that exists on the edge of prairie. If remanent savannas existed on the area, we would try to restore them; however, no savannas are known to exist on this area.

Suggests limiting the amount of tree harvesting in some areas. Would like some old-growth forests to remain.

Old growth forest is a prescription commonly used on this conservation area. Each of our management compartments have areas that are considered old growth.

Suggests removing fescue, conducting more prescribed burns and increasing native grasses on the area to increase quail populations and support quail hunting.

This is currently being done to the extent possible, as more opportunity is found more of this sort of management will be implemented.

Suggests managing bottomland fields for small game.

Many of these fields have been planted to bottomland hardwoods for future improvement of stream and habitat functions. Where compatible, some strategies will be implemented to improve small game opportunity.

Aquatic Resource Management

Suggests working with Trout Unlimited or other groups to improve trout habitat.

We are currently working with Trout Unlimited and other fishing organizations to improve trout populations in the Meramec River.

Suggests changes in fish harvest regulations (i.e., recommends an 18-inch, 1 brown trout limit, and no gigging in the trophy trout reach).

Current regulations went through extensive public comment periods prior to implementation. Regulations may be altered in the future as appropriate and necessary.

Public Use Management

Trails

Suggests adding a bridge over the Dry Fork Creek to assist in crossing the creek.

MDC does not support this sort of infrastructure due to extensive maintenance issues.

Recommends adding horseback-riding trails, if the Department determines that horseback-riding is permitted per the initial donation requests that the area should be used as a “hike-in” area.

This area is hike in only as per requested with donation of funds to purchase a large portion of this property. Horseback riding is also not compliant with lands purchased with Land and Water Conservation Funds, which provided the other funds for the purchase of this area.

Supports maintaining area as “hike-in” only (no bicycles or horseback riding).

Limited access is part of the original donation stipulations and will be honored.

Hunting

Supports maintaining archery-only deer hunting regulations. Opposes allowing firearms deer hunting.

This goes along with current regulations, and there is currently no intention of changing this.

Suggests monitoring deer herd on area for CWD and other health concerns.

This is already being done.

Suggests having a managed firearms deer hunt at Woodson K. Woods CA.

If deer population increases beyond desired levels, a managed hunt may be considered.

Suggests improving hunting access for people with mobility disabilities.

We have 3 mobility impaired hunting blinds on the conservation area that have met current utilization requests for the past several years.

Suggests stricter regulations to protect turkeys and increase turkey population.

Currently Statewide regulations apply. We will continue to monitor wildlife populations and will consider stricter regulations if needed in the future.

Other

Concern with lack of enforcement on this area. Suggests adding a strategy to address enforcing existing rules and regulations (camping, fishing, ATVs, etc.) for this area.

Any violations witnessed should be immediately reported to the Operation Game Thief Hotline at (800) 392-1111 or the Phelps County Agent or two Crawford County Agents.

Values river access.

The Highway 8 river access will be maintained as an access point to the Meramec River.

Administrative Considerations

Suggests purchasing additional adjacent land, if available.

This has already been included as an element in this area plan.

Concerns with easement road maintenance. Appreciates new gate at entrance to easement road.

Area management will take all reasonable steps to accommodate neighboring landowners.

Neighboring landowner interested in new fencing agreement.

This is currently in the works with the area manager.

Concern that area map does not adequately define private land boundaries.

All boundaries are marked with signs, and the boundary is clearly indicated on the brochures. Any trespassing should be immediately reported to the Conservation Agents or the county sheriff.

Neighboring landowner requests habitat assistance on their property.

Please contact the appropriate MDC Private Lands Conservationist.

Correct spelling of the James Foundation property is Maramec Spring Park.

Corrections have been made.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 4: Compartment Map

Additional Appendices:

Appendix A: Draft Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Figure 1: Area Map

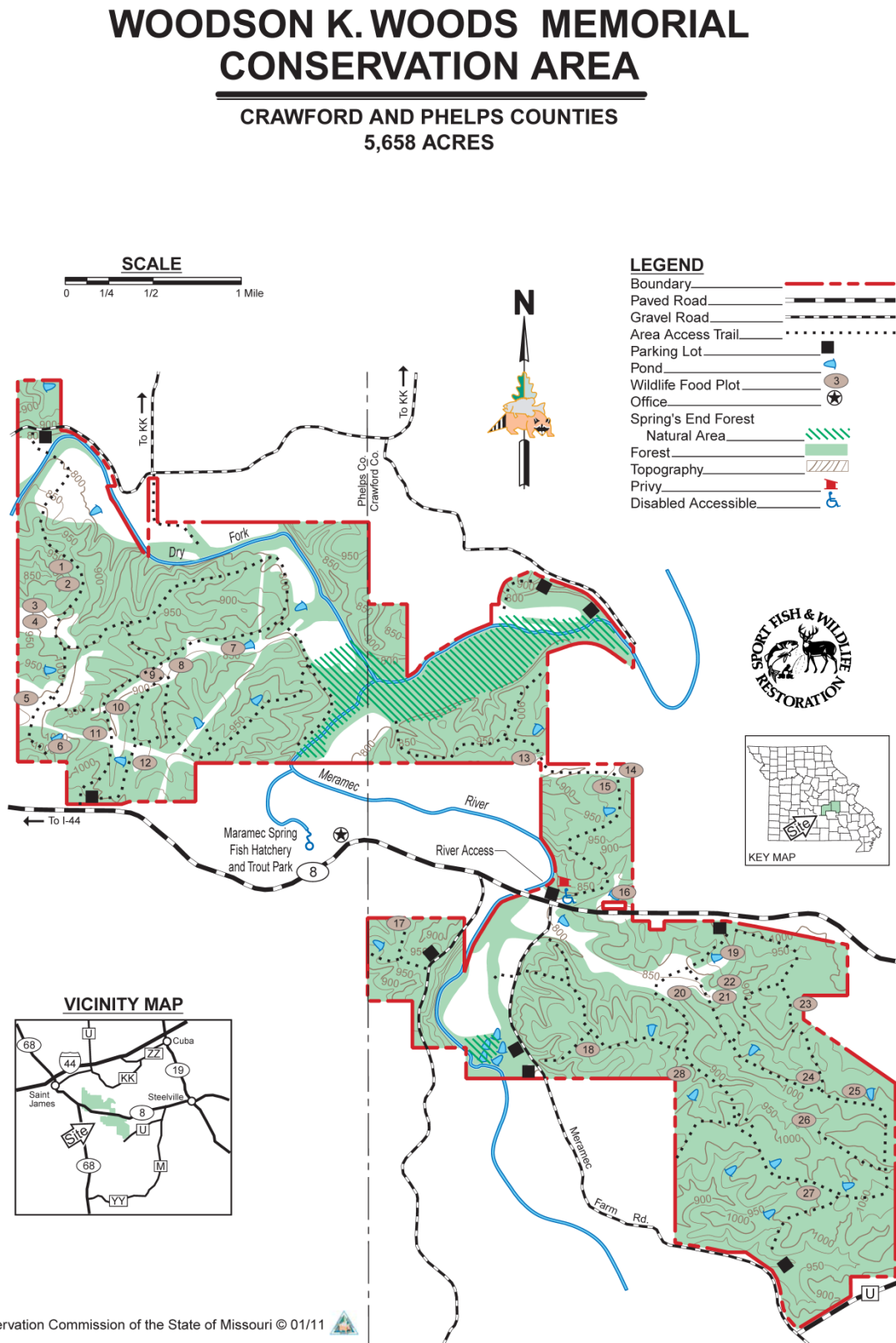


Figure 2: Aerial Map

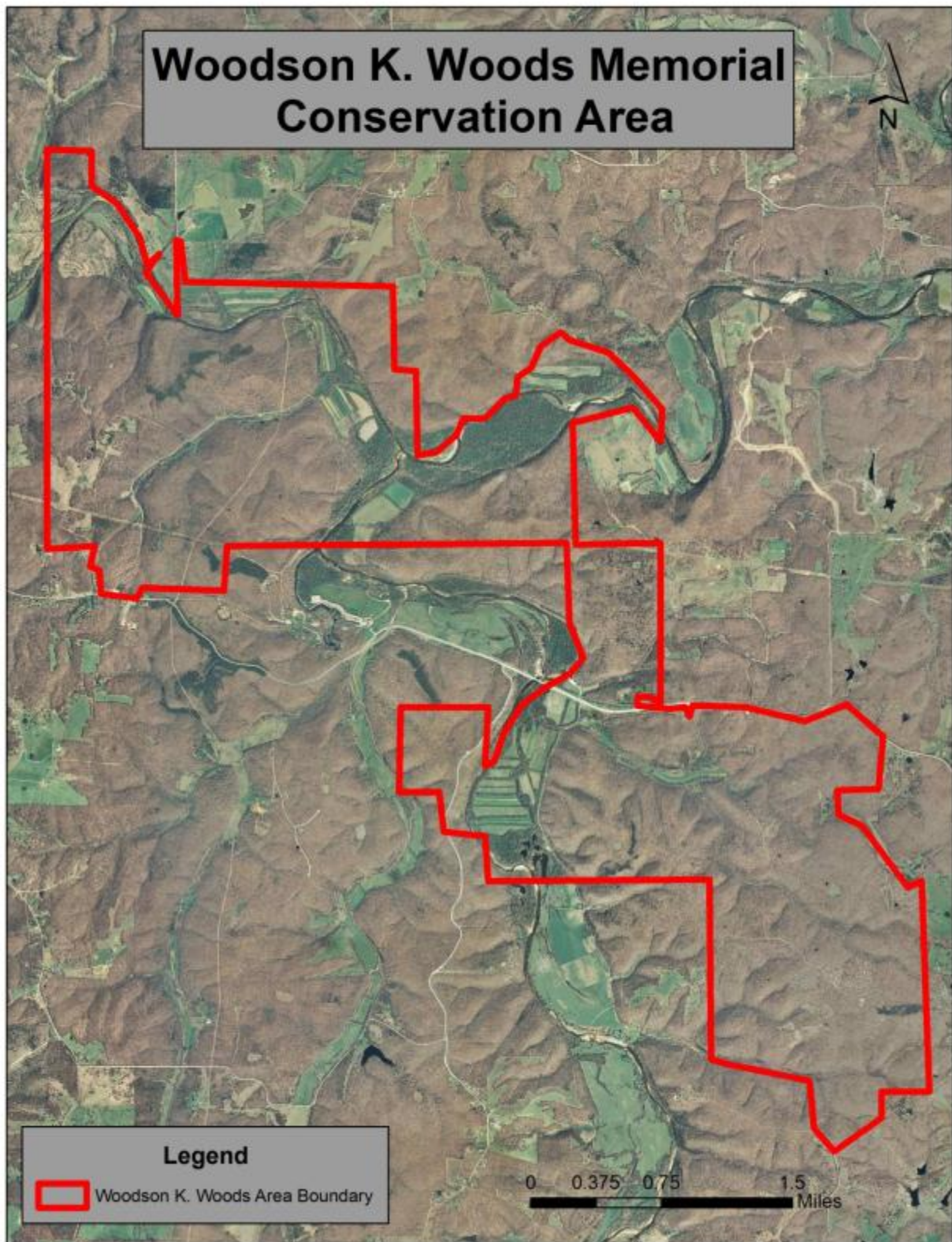


Figure 3: Topographic Map

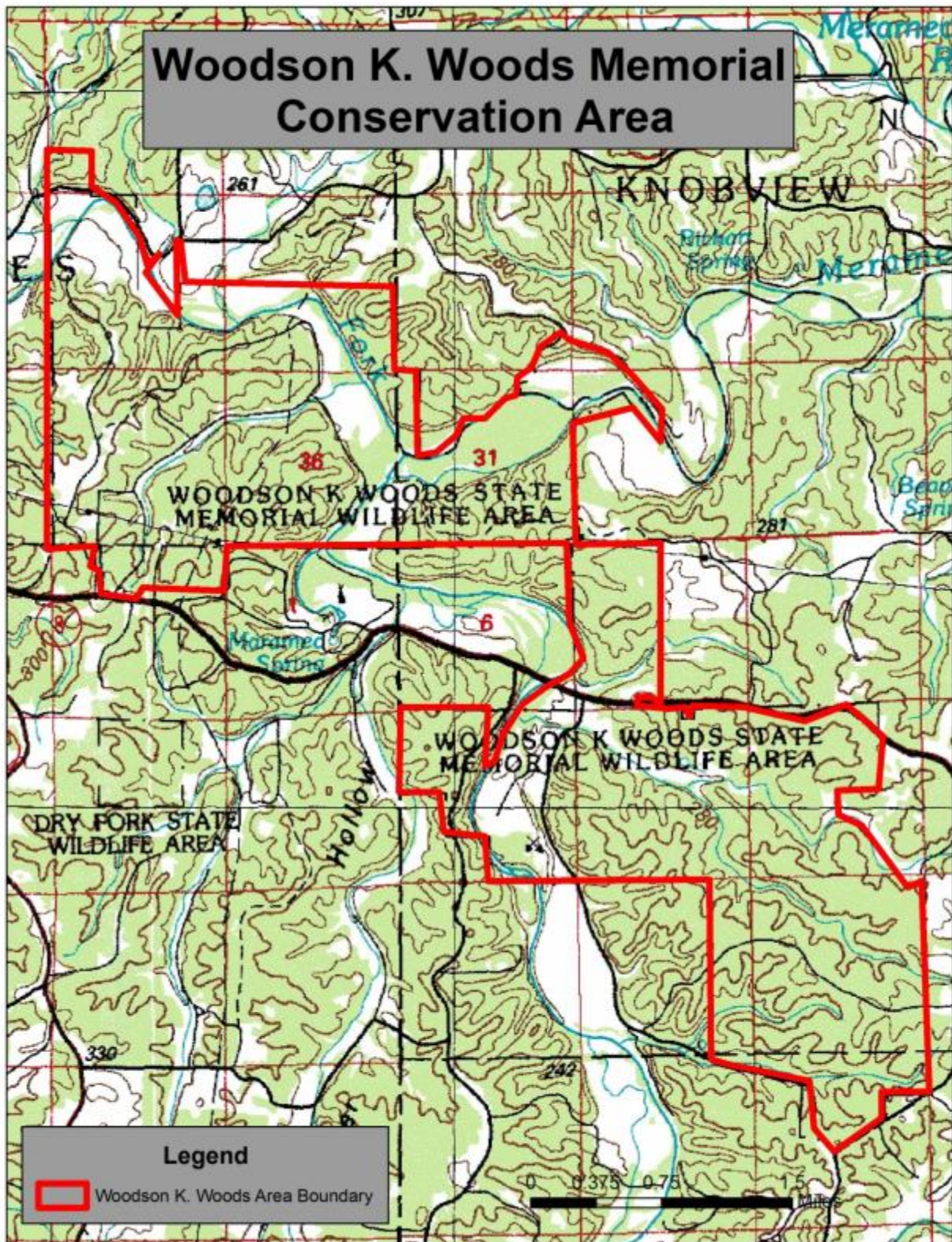
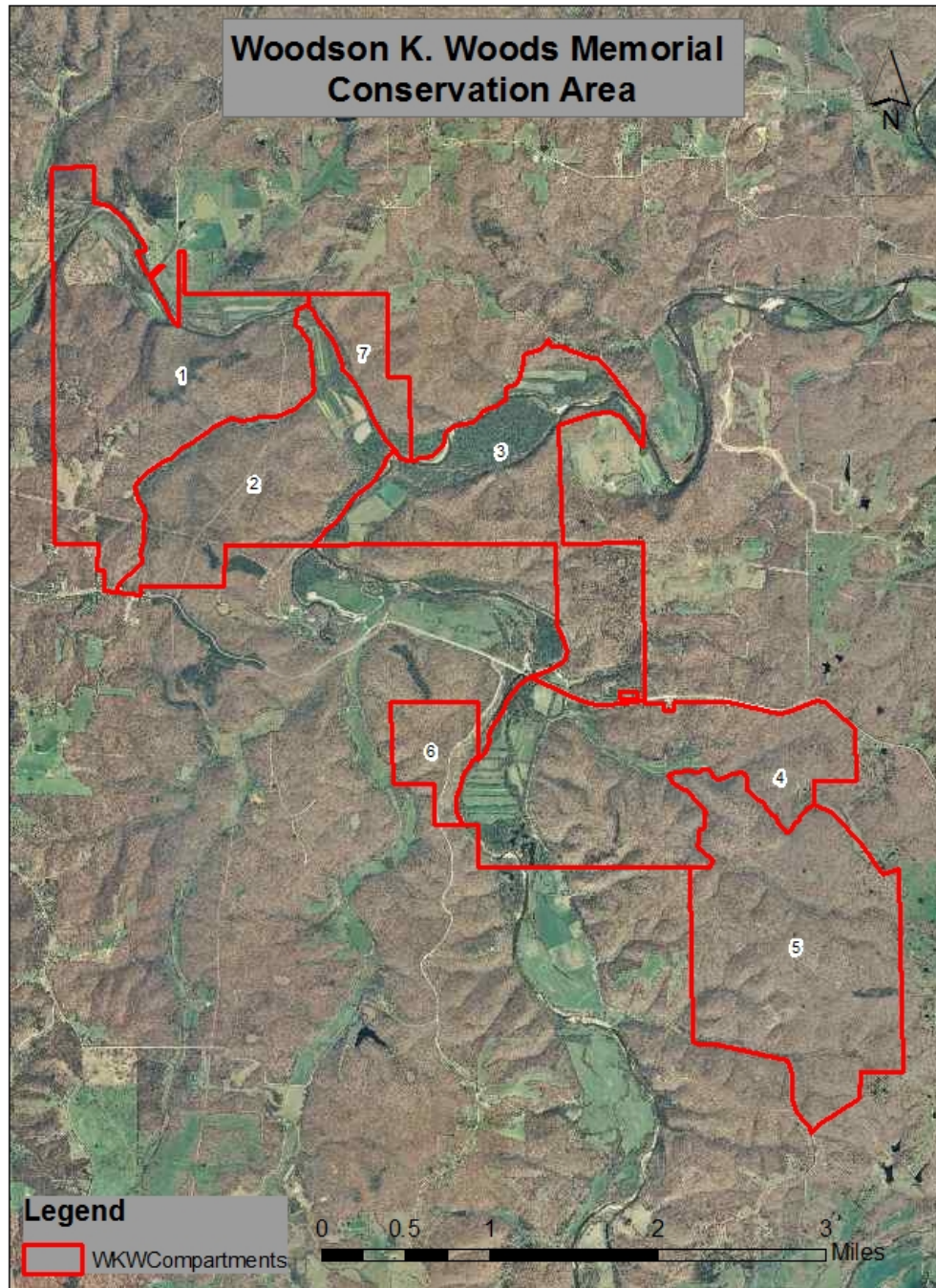


Figure 4: Compartment Map



Appendix A: Draft Woodson K. Woods Memorial Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (March 1-31, 2015)

Looking over the plan I think it looks like a good overall plan. Would love to see hiking trails developed such as a rope bridge over the dry fork for easy crossing of the river. As a landowner next to the area I am striving to rid my farm of the autumn olive bushes and glad to see the plan includes removal of this plant.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the plan for the Woods Area. I understand the plan is very basic and can not include everything but I would like it to mention the management of the numerous food plots and waterholes that are located on the area. Maintaining the water holes is definitely a plus for wildlife during drought years and the food plots add green browse in places where there is little. Also most area users don't see the benefits of timber harvest as a wildlife management tool but they do recognize that food plots indicate that you are doing something for wildlife. Something as simple and cost effective as planting wheat is a big plus.

Is it necessary to place (Forestry) in plan to indicate what Division is responsible? I thought that Forestry was responsible for all the area with the exception of the fishery management. I didn't think Wildlife was involved on the Woods Area.

General Information and Conditions, II(B) Caves: I have found several caves on the area that may support overwintering bats. They are located under Suicide Hill and along the right descending bank bluff 1/4 to 1/2 miles upstream from Suicide Hill.

Management Considerations, V: It is difficult to review this plan for the seven compartments outlined in the draft since there are no maps or descriptions of where these seven compartment are. In addition, there are no defined plans outlined for what is planned in these compartments. I am concerned about timber harvest on these areas and would like to have better information presented on specific timber harvest plans, what compartments, time frame and if there is any input on specific plans? I would also like to see some more crop land/habitat improvement on many of the food plots or open lands on the area. There are some crops in the fields near the old sand/gravel pits but many of the food plots scattered around the area have very little diversity or food sources for wildlife. Some of the open field areas are beginning to become too overgrown with succession and would be good to see some of these set back to more herbaceous settings. Without these food plots and open areas, with a mast failure, there is limited resources for wildlife. In addition if you plan on harvest of mast producing trees in some of these compartments, without plans for openings, savannahs, etc. could set back some of the management goals for the area. I know the powerline ROW with Ameran provides a large swath of open areas that provide forest openings. Could there be an agreement with Ameran to expand the food plots or even plant milo/corn/or other food sources along this alignment? These would not encroach or endanger the ROW maintenance.

Section VI, Aquatic Resource Mgt. Considerations, Obj. 1: I fish the trophy trout section of WKW

and have seen a major decline in the brown trout fishery since the 1990's and 2000's. I believe a lot of it may be due to deteriorating habitat conditions with no sinuosity, deep holes filling in with sand/gravel and shortage of good overhead woody cover and debris. I realize this is a very flashy, high velocity section of river but would like MDC to consider working with Trout Unlimited and other groups to investigate if some large boulder, bank stabilization, habitat structures could be put in place. As for harvest, I would recommend a 1 fish, 18-inch length limit, and the elimination of gigging in the trophy trout reach. I have seen the fishery on the Current River benefit from these stricter regulations. I have been encouraged this winter by larger brown trout being stocked which may help improve the fishery. However, I never see any enforcement presence and I remember years ago when Spence Turner ran the trout program that there was annual sampling, creel surveys, etc. and I can remember some really memorable brown trout trips. I understand the competing interests and difficulty of new regulations but I think with some effort we could have a Blue Ribbon fishery here.

Section VIII, Lands Proposed for Acquisition: I would encourage MDC to consider purchasing lands in Crawford County in the area just downstream of Dry Fork confluence along the north (left descending bank) of the Meramec River and down to Suicide Hill. Also, contact Chaumier Farms on the lands bordering the eastern side of the area north of Highway 8 to see if there is any interest in selling this land to the department. I don't know what compartments these are. Hopefully the James Foundations properties remain as is, but if not make a priority to purchase these properties on the north side of the Meramec River in Crawford and Phelps Counties. Future land uses in the areas I identified could have a negative effect on this priority watershed area.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I would like to see a map of the 7 compartments and what plans are for these areas. I have used WKW since 1990 and consider it one of the Department's jewels. Priority for purchasing surrounding lands if available and affordable would only benefit the area. Savannah management would benefit the area. I understand the importance of TSI management, but would like you to really consider limiting the amount of clear cuts or major tree harvests in some areas. It would be good to see some old growth forest remain.

There is approximately 40 acres of Woodson K. Woods CA that lies north of Co. Rd 3620. (The most extreme northern portion of the CA) Over the past few years, home sites have risen in close proximity to the area. In the past no firearms deer hunting has been allowed on the CA and thus we have not had an issue with safety from hunters using the area. I strongly urge you to keep that provision intact for the CA or at least on that northern portion north of Co. Rd 3620. Safety is our number one concern. Thank you for the opportunity to offer input into the Woodson K. Woods CA future plans.

I just wanted to clarify my earlier comment. The area we have a concern for was in the northern portion of the "Gray" tract that was added later. Thanks again.

I appreciate the work done on Woodson K. Woods. The conservation area is more than beautiful. Enjoy it at least 60 or 7 times a year. Access along Meramec Farms Road important access for family. Want to keep Woodson's request for hiking access for full use.

The river access on State Rd 8 is well maintained and important to the community.

Thank you for all your work.

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Woodson K. Woods Memorial CA Draft Management Plan. It is stated that the original donation from the Woods Foundation carried a request that the area be accessed by hiking only. Out of respect for this request Show-Me Missouri Back Country Horsemen has chosen not to recommend amending use restrictions to permit equestrian use. Instead SMMBCH will focus on adding multi-use trails that permit equestrian use on Meramec State Park and Huzzah CA, thereby providing needed trail riding opportunities in underserved Crawford County.

That being said, the Woods Memorial CA possesses key desirable characteristics for equestrian use—soils, topography, some infrastructure, and access off of good, paved roads. Should development of multi-use trails on Meramec SP or Huzzah CA not be authorized, and should the Department find that equestrian use is in keeping with the intent of the request carried by the original donation, SMMBCH recommends consideration of development of multi-use trails with equestrian use allowed.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

I think for the most part you finally got it right. The poaching has declined significantly and we are finally getting a deer and turkey population back. I believe that is primarily due to the creation of a safer area for wildlife to propagate. It is imperative to have an area that is less likely to be poached by making it a bows only hunting area. Plus this gives an exclusive area for the growing population of bow hunters to use, increasing their odds for success.

In our area the turkey and deer population are still low compared to to rest of the state. I have been hunting here since 1967. I moved here ten years later. I wish that MDC would put a moratorium on taking hen turkeys for ten years. Bad hatches,due to weather, varmints, due to increased numbers and continued poaching do to non thinking offenders plagues our population. You top that with inconsistent acorn production and the turkey needs relief. thus the tom should also be protected by taking only one bird in this area of Crawford county. We have more hunters and we need more birds. When I moved here I consistently saw flocks of 50 or more birds. I haven't seen that in decades. This is already to long. I have mush more to say but this is a good start. rather talk to someone in person.

Sincerely,

I believe you future plans are very good for Woodson K. Woods but I would like to add 1 comment for your relationship with adjacent landowners. I live for modern firearms deer season and Woodson K. Woods allows NO hunting during this period. In the past when everyone could hunt there, slob deer hunters have caused many problems so the area was closed to gun hunting to stop these problems. Granted that action worked but it gave the deer a huge refuge area to go to and hurt the hunting chances for the bordering landowners by not keeping the deer moving. I

suggest having a limited draw for a determined amount hunters so that the area isn't flooded with hunters that cause problems but still keep the deer moving. This would benefit both groups of hunters and the development of good will for all involved. Thank you,

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1996: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb10.htm> . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking...

A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/scb7.htm>). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions.

Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless.

Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT?

To see exactly what harm mountain biking does to the land, watch this 5-minute video: <http://vimeo.com/48784297>.

In addition to all of this, it is extremely dangerous: http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtb_dangerous.htm .

For more information: <http://mjvande.nfshost.com/mtbfaq.htm> .

The common thread among those who want more recreation in our parks is total ignorance about and disinterest in the wildlife whose homes these parks are. Yes, if humans are the only beings that matter, it is simply a conflict among humans (but even then, allowing bikes on trails harms the MAJORITY of park users -- hikers and equestrians -- who can no longer safely and peacefully enjoy their parks).

The parks aren't gymnasiums or racetracks or even human playgrounds. They are WILDLIFE HABITAT, which is precisely why they are attractive to humans. Activities such as mountain biking, that destroy habitat, violate the charter of the parks.

Even kayaking and rafting, which give humans access to the entirety of a water body, prevent the wildlife that live there from making full use of their habitat, and should not be allowed. Of course those who think that only humans matter won't understand what I am talking about -- an indication of the sad state of our culture and educational system.

I would like to see more upland game management. I enjoy quail hunting and remember back in the early 80's hunting numerous coveys of quail on the Woods area. I have hunted it several times over the past couple of years and have only found quail on the northern boundary, where you conducted a prescribed burn a few years ago in an old field. Much of the remainder of the Woods area has Fescue on the boundaries of the crop ground and little to no native grass. Would like to see the Fescue eradicated as an invasive species and native grass planted in its place. I have improved quail habitat on my private property, which is near the Woods area and now enjoy quail on the property. I learned these habitat improvement techniques from MDC, however I do not see them widely implemented on the Woods area. It appears the focus is for deer habitat.

My RV park and campground bordered Woodson K. Woods on the east and north side of my property. Campers use the conservation area for: hiking, nature walks, exploration, pond fishing, varmit hunting, access to Dry Fork Creek, and bow hunting (only) in season for deer and turkey. I feel comfortable with bow hunting being the only type of hunting allowed on WKW land, for the safety of constituents that utilize the land. Personally I enjoy taking camping children on walks in the woods to introduce them to plants and trees of the areas and to introduce them to land conservation (the whys and hows), and that includes scout groups, as well. WKW is a beautiful area with so many features to explore.

Submitted by mail: We are the landowners described on page 1, under IV (Area Restrictions or Limitations), C Easements. We access our 80 acres of ground thru your easement. This 10 year Management Plan is pretty complete, but I feel that some additions could be added or addressed.

Nowhere in the plan have you addressed enforcing existing rules and regulations for this area. The public camps and makes fires all the time on the Meramec River within the Woodson K Woods area. Fishing with live bait and not following length and limit rules on trout is also done. ATVs also run on my gravel bar at the upper end of my property. Trespassing has been and always will be a big issue.

On Page 5, VII Public Use Management Considerations, (3) Build relationships with neighboring landowners and Page 6, Management Objective 3, Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring landowners. On this issue I feel that Mo Dept of Conservation has failed or been very poor in the past. Since Conservation gave us an easement and provided public access many years ago, we have had major problems. These problems are, but not limited to the following.

1. The easement road has not had yearly maintenance. The road is very steep in areas (cardiac hill) and requires the run outs and ruts repaired often. In short, I acknowledge that the road is a maintenance nightmare. We have worked on this road in the past to allow normal non 4-wheel drive vehicles to access our property. I finally requested in 2010 that Conservation work on the road (see enclosed letter). I received no reply to this letter, but a short time later the road was

graded. I assume Conservation did the work, but a short reply to my letter would have been appreciated. We also keep the tree trimming and whatever fallen tree removal is necessary to allow access. As you can see in the enclosed letter, I also said that I would keep this road up if you gave me permission. Received no reply.

2. At the entrance to the easement off Besmer Road, there has always been a cable with a conservation lock on the left and our lock on the right. The lock on the right is also key shared with the landowner (40 acres) up river from us. This cable has never been of any value in stopping trespassing. Pulling posts, unscrewing hardware, etc. has all been done, and subsequently repaired by us.

We have a small cabin on the river so it falls on us to keep things repaired and secure. After much complaining, over many years, Conservation is putting in a new steel post gate to replace the cable. Thank you very much. Conservation doesn't use this road very much. Trout stocking off our property seems to be the main use. I have a very good relationship with the manager of the Maramec Springs Trout Hatchery. We have talked about many issues including the road/cable problems.

3. When we received our easement, Conservation, in partnership with us, built the fence and gate that separates Woodson K Woods and our property. Conservation provided the materials and we provided the labor. Conservation also "promised" that they would provide access to the river outside of our gate. With the public going down Cardiac Hill on your road and our property/gate/fence cutting off this access, a trail was needed across the field to the river. Conservation has never done this. Because there is no trail, the public has continuously trespassed on us, broken down our gate and cut our fence many times. Finally as the public used the area more and more, I started (about 10-12 year ago) to cut a bush hog trail from our gate across the end of the field to the river. I do this about 3 times a year (spring/summer/fall) and it has helped dramatically to cut the damage to our fence/gate. In regard to this bush hog trail, my son said that "Conservation" usually does this in other conservation areas. The fence that I mentioned will have to have major repair or be replaced this year. Age and trespassing damage (corner posts broken, wire cut, metal posts pushed over) demand that this be done. This fence and the signs that are on it are all that keep our property from being overrun with people that come from your parking lot on Besmer Road. Is Conservation interested in a new partnership to repair or replace this fence? This fence also provides a limit to gun hunting during gun season for Woodson K. Woods.

4. In regard to public trespassing. Many people use your maps to help them know where they can legally hunt/fish/hike. In my opinion, your maps do not define private ground adequately.

On page 6, Management Objective 3, Strategy 2, Promote habitat on neighboring landowner's properties. I would love to help with this as I want our land to be better for the time that I looked over it.

I am 76 years old and have hunted/fished and trapped extensively all my life on what used to be "The Powell Ranch" and is now Woodson K Woods. I lived for 3 months each summer in your "cabin". I am very familiar with this entire area, including Maramec Springs. If anyone who

reads this would like to talk with me, I would be happy to share what little I know.
Good Questions/discussion points might include the following:

Why otters?

Why is gigging allowed on Red ribbon trout streams?

The Dry Fork River deterioration and pollution issue.

The loss of the hellbender, fewer crawfish, fewer frogs, loss of hellgramite, etc.

Much fewer turkey.

Better Quality Deer Management (good job conservation)

I have always been an avid supporter of Missouri Department of Conservation. I also really wish that I wasn't your neighbor.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten comment: Please maintain Achery Only deer status and work to improve handicap hunting access deeper into Conservation Area.

Handwritten comment: Typo under Area Background of Appendices Maramec is the correct spelling in reference to the James Foundation park.

Handwritten comment: Please maintain archery only deer hunting, no firearms deer hunting.

Handwritten comment: Maintain Archery only deer regulations. Hopes we are monitoring deer heard for CWD and other health concerns. Would like to see bottom fields that were planted to trees in the past managed for small game.